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OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA

UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

Letter dated 3 February 1997 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of note No. OK1/7/2-50, dated 28 January 1997, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates addressed to the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Abu Dhabi, setting forth the Ministry's vigorous protests against the violation of the territorial waters of the United Arab Emirates on 19 January 1997 by a logistic landing ship flying the Iranian flag, which was fitted out with four 40 mm/60 guns, and by another Iranian vessel carrying vehicles, cement, sand and building materials. This illegal action is a blatant violation of the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates, a flagrant breach of the norms and principles governing relations between States and conduct that is contrary to the principle of good-neighbourliness.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under the items entitled "Oceans and the law of the sea" and "United Nations Decade of International Law".

(Signed) Khalid Khalifa AL-MUALLA
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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ANNEX

Note verbale dated 28 January 1997 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates addressed to the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Abu Dhabi

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates presents its compliments to the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Abu Dhabi and has the honour to inform it that on 19 January 1997, at 5.30 a.m., units of the border guards, coast guard units and police aircraft accompanying them sighted an object at sea 3 nautical miles off Hamra island in the emirate of Ras al-Khaimah. It was ascertained that the object was a naval vessel flying the Iranian flag, the Hengam 511, a logistic landing ship fitted out with four 40 mm/60 guns, sailing at a speed of 14.5 knots.

On the same day, another object was sighted in the same area. It, too, was found to be an Iranian vessel carrying vehicles, cement, sand and building materials.

The captain of the vessel, with whom contact had been made for the purpose of ascertaining the reasons for the vessel's entering the territorial waters of the United Arab Emirates, stated that he had the authorization of the port authorities of the emirates of Ajman and Ras al-Khaimah, an assertion that was subsequently found to be totally unfounded.

Given such unjustified violation of its territorial waters, the United Arab Emirates vigorously protests against these illegal actions, which constitute a blatant violation of its sovereignty, a flagrant breach of the norms and principles governing relations between States and conduct that is contrary to the principle of good-neighbourliness.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs therefore expects that the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran will promptly convey to the competent authorities the vehement protest of the United Arab Emirates and the latter's wishes that such violations of its sovereignty will not be repeated, as they can only have a detrimental effect on relations between the two countries.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs takes this opportunity to convey to the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran the renewed assurances of its highest consideration.